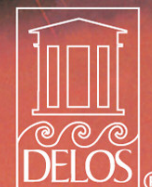




RESPIGHI
ROMAN FESTIVALS
STRAUSS
DON JUAN
LUTOSLAWSKI
CONCERTO
FOR
ORCHESTRA

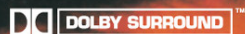
DE 3070



**THE OREGON
SYMPHONY**

JAMES DE PREIST

conductor



DE 3070
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ORIGINAL DIGITAL RECORDING

BRAVURA

OTTORINO RESPIGHI

[1] Feste Romane (Roman Festivals) (25:42)

Circenses
Giubileo (The Jubilee)
Ottobrata (The October Festival)
La Befana (The Epiphany)

RICHARD STRAUSS

[2] Don Juan (16:43)

WITOLD LUTOSLAWSKI

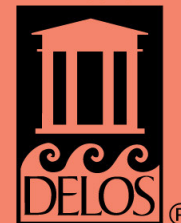
[3] Concerto for Orchestra (27:43)

Intrada
Capriccio notturno e Arioso
Passacaglia, Toccata e Corale

THE OREGON SYMPHONY **JAMES DE PREIST, Conductor**

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 70:24

DE 3070



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BRAVURA (brä voo 'rä)

1. a piece requiring great skill and spirit in the performer.
2. a display of daring; brilliant performance.

Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood*
Recording Engineer: *John Eargle*
Production: *Carol Rosenberger, Adam Stern, Bejun Mehta*
Associate Engineers: *Peter Alward, John Frazee*
Production Associate: *Phyllis Bernard*

Microphones: *Sanken CU-41 (main pair), Schoeps MK5, Milab DC 63, Neumann KM 84*
Console: *Soundcraft 200B*
Monitor Loudspeakers: *JBL L100T*
Digital Recorder: *Sony 1630 / DMR-4000*

Digital Editor: *Sony DAE-1100A*
Recorded: *May 28 and 29, 1987*

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Design: *Tri Arts, Inc.*

Special thanks: *the Rodgers Organ Company, Hillsboro, Oregon, for the use of the Rodgers Oxford 925 Classic Organ*

THIS RECORDING WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM WTD INDUSTRIES, INC.

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NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

In a letter to his father on November 7, 1889, Richard Strauss (1864–1949) described the tremendous technical demands which the Weimar orchestra faced in preparing for the premiere of his latest tone poem, *Don Juan*: “I felt really sorry for the poor horns and trumpets. They blew till they were blue in the face, it’s such a strenuous business for them. . . The orchestra seems to be enjoying the whole affair, in spite of their understandable amazement at such novelties.” Upon completing his third symphonic poem, *Roman Festivals*, the Italian composer and contemporary of Strauss, Ottorino Respighi (1879–1936) remarked: “With the present constitution of the orchestra, it’s impossible to achieve more, and I don’t think I shall write any more scores of this kind.” For Respighi, *Roman Festivals* was his ultimate statement on writing for large orchestra. The Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski (1913–1994) expressed an interest similar to Strauss’s and Respighi’s in orchestral brilliance. In an interview held twenty years after the completion of his *Concerto for Orchestra* in 1954, he described the “fascination” which “the sound of the orchestra, its richness, intensity of colors etc. has always held for me.” In their debut recording — the first in 92 years — The Oregon Symphony led by James DePreist takes as the unifying theme of its program the immense virtuosity and emotional appeal of these three orchestral works.

Roman Festivals, completed in 1928, was the third in a set of symphonic poems [*Fountains of Rome* (1914-16), *Pines of Rome* (1923-4)] portraying different sights and events in the Italian capital. The first performance was conducted by Arturo Toscanini in 1929 in Carnegie Hall, and the work met with great success both in the U.S. and in a second performance in Rome in March of that year. In the view of our present conductor, James DePreist, “the appeal of *Roman Festivals* comes from how successfully you convince people of the pictures Respighi is painting. *Roman Festivals* sets out to do a specific thing — evoke images.”

A literary program accompanies each of the four movements (or festivals). The first movement, entitled “Circenses,” thrusts us immediately into a heightened state of consciousness. Respighi depicts the unlocking of the heavy iron doors of the Circus Maximus with a jagged fortissimo triplet line in strings and winds that leaps to a sustained B-flat while the double basses enter with an E-flat pedal. The massive orchestral texture (derived from Respighi’s use of 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 3 trombones, strings, tympani, cymbals), the nearly four-octave span between piccolo and double bass, the flashing rhythm, and the fortissimo dynamics all contribute to the intensely dramatic effect. Next the crowd begins entering the circus to the strain of

a fanfare played by three offstage trumpets. The orchestra's jagged triplet motive interjects the fanfare twice, rising chromatically the second time as the crowd surges forward. A final antiphonal passage between offstage and onstage trumpets completes Respighi's first picture.

The mood, however, is always changing. As James DePreist explains, "within each movement there are incredibly subtle subsections. Each movement is a microcosm. Unity comes from making the contrasts plausible." For example, after the circus doors close to the menacing accompaniment of low strings playing a heaving line in F minor, the next subsection opens with a poignant religious song (Song of the Christian martyrs) in full orchestra. Only three measures have been stated when Respighi interrupts the song with trombone growls depicting the wild beasts in the circus. Such astonishing variety in mood and instrumentation places virtuosic demands on the orchestra, DePreist points out.

In the final three measures of "Circenses," Respighi changes the tempo to Largo, reduces his texture, and leaves us with a feeling of beauty that contrasts sharply with the movement's tense opening. The four-note brass motive in the Largo (first heard as an introduction to the martyrs' song in movement one) now introduces the pilgrims' mournful ostinato figure which begins the second movement, "Jubilee." At the outset of "Jubilee," we imagine pilgrims praying as they trail along the highway. Their ostinato in first violins becomes part of an increasingly complex instrumental layering, first with the

entrance of a woodwind melody, then with the taking up of that melody by brass. The woodwind and brass tune is Respighi's transformation of the famous "Dies irae" ("Day of Wrath"), the chant from the Office for the Dead. It becomes a hymn of praise when it rings out in the trumpets amidst descending string and woodwind lines marking the pilgrims' arrival in the holy city. In the final five measures, piano octaves and chimes depicting church bells punctuate a repeated note melody in the horns which provides a link with "The October Festival" where it appears as a prominent opening theme.

"The October Festival" is full of imaginative uses of instruments to paint pictures and moods. The tinkling of bells during the festival merry-making is depicted by the rare choice of sleighbells. The movement closes with a romantic serenade featuring the mandolin, an instrument sometimes seen in opera orchestras but rarely in the symphony orchestra. Respighi's subsequent amplification of the mandolin theme in the violins poses an "orchestral challenge," DePreist observes, and "calls for the utmost subtlety from musicians and conductor." The first violins "must play the melody sweetly and expressively without being saccharine." Similarly the rhapsodic solo contributions from first violin and cello towards the end of the serenade require a "subtle shifting of tempo" in order to convey delicate passion rather than indulgence. DePreist slows the tempo ever so slightly and calls for expressive emphasis on certain pitches so that the music temporarily floats. At the end

of the serenade the orchestra dissolves into a chamber ensemble as the sleighbells return to accompany the dying away of a beautiful melodic wisp in the strings. In this movement and throughout the score, DePreist notes, Respighi commands an extraordinary coloristic palette from sparkle and brilliance to delicate chamber and solo textures.

The fourth movement of *Roman Festivals*, “The Epiphany” (depicting festivities in the Piazza Navona) is a tour de force in its whirlwind tempo and densely layered orchestration. In a striking passage near the beginning of the movement, the insistent clarinet motive that opened “Epiphany” is interrupted suddenly by a syncopated almost jazzy passage featuring lower woodwinds, brass, strings, and nine percussion instruments (tympani, three kinds of snare drum, rattle, cymbals, bass drum, chimes, xylophone, and tavoletta which is a board struck with a hammer). Different orchestral members are heard on every beat of the measure, with syncopation arising from the marcato chords played on offbeats by the strings, woodwinds, brass, and tympani. The passage suggests raucous crowds dancing, clamoring, and pushing each other forward.

Strains of a hurdy-gurdy filter through the air during a waltz section which offers one of the rare appearances of an organ in the orchestral repertoire. From the waltz onward, the music is “kaleidoscopic” (DePreist). The tremendous whirlwind of the movement’s final bars is slowed down briefly only to thrust us back into the

frenzy when DePreist doubles the tempo. DePreist compares these closing bars to an airplane revving up and then releasing its brakes. When brakes of the last fermata are released, the orchestra “absolutely explodes into acceleration with fireworks sweeping us into the final bar.”

Whereas Respighi painted pictures of sights and sounds in his *Roman Festivals*, Richard Strauss portrayed poetic ideas. In his memoirs Strauss describes how the poetic idea was “the formative element,” the “guiding principle for my own symphonic work.” Strauss’s tone poems — to use the term he preferred — were long one-movement works, with the early poems based on sonata form. **Don Juan**, Strauss’s second tone poem, received its premiere on November 11, 1889 in Weimar under the composer’s direction. Its triumphant success brought Strauss recognition as the most important and progressive German composer since Wagner. Much of the success stemmed from the score’s unprecedented technical demands, its imaginative scoring, and its wedding of poetic and formal continuity.

“The major challenge in a Strauss tone poem,” states James DePreist, “is to maintain the sense of the unified whole. The multiple strands of music move horizontally, with lines emerging and fading — germs of meaning in a contrapuntal ebb and flow.” Conductor and orchestra must “make the complex strands a unified whole” and “create one long continuous line that sings regardless of tempo.”

The Don Juan story goes back to the legendary Span-

ish lover whose lust for women is insatiable and who is finally condemned for his sins. Strauss selected a long version of the legend by the 19th-century German poet Nikolaus Lenau and placed excerpts from this poem on the first page of the musical score. The “poetic idea” unifying Strauss’s score is the Don’s unquenchable passion, an idea well suited to the continuity of musical line described by DePreist.

The music opens with the lengthy ardent theme representing Don Juan who, in the words of Lenau, is enraptured by the “endless charms of beautiful women.” In their performance of this theme, The Oregon Symphony unleashes its fortissimo with such ease and spontaneity that it seems to have a continual reservoir of sound. This, DePreist asserts, must be the nature of the Strauss orchestra. In a manner similar to Respighi, Strauss soon dissolves rich orchestral textures into chamber ensembles: difficult triplet figures moving at lightning speed in violins and cellos culminate in a sudden pianissimo and a dramatic change in mood as we enter the first love scene. Don Juan’s lady love is depicted by a delicate solo in the upper register of the first violin (and then a second melody in the dominant key). An accelerando and impatient arpeggio lines in the strings (portraying the hero’s haste to move on to his next “tempest of enjoyment”) lead to a recall of the Don Juan theme followed by the second and central love episode in the symphonic poem.

This episode opens with a lyrical theme in cellos and

violas which becomes the countermelody to a beautiful solo oboe line in G major. In shaping the oboe solo so as to create a relaxed sound and to express with it “the breath of a woman” which Don Juan likens to the “aroma of spring,” DePreist incorporates a flexibility of tempo and takes a little more time with the half note where it is preceded and followed by a quarter note. He scrupulously observes note values of the accompaniment so that there is no spacing between the oboe’s sustained notes and the accompaniment below.

The lyrical cello countermelody in the oboe passage provides a transitional passage to an assertive heroic statement blared out by four horns. DePreist applies a dynamic level of forte, thereby reserving energy for the theme’s second fortissimo appearance in trombones. The music builds and builds, paralleling Don Juan’s utterance in the Lenau poem: “I shun satiety and the exhaustion of pleasure.” Triplets in the second violins ascend higher and higher; Strauss develops motives from the Don theme and from the heroic theme until the orchestra is spent, and brass and strings sit on a long whole note chord. Yet even then cellos and violas face the challenge of unfolding and repeating the opening sixteenth notes of the Don Juan theme, incorporating a crescendo each time which culminates in the recapitulation. The climax of the recapitulation is the heroic horn theme which returns a third higher and is repeated with even more dramatic effect by unison strings and winds in their upper registers. The music continues to build with string

triplets and then a final harp glissando followed by a breathtaking fermata. The build-up has been so dramatic that we continue to hear glissandi even when the music has stopped. The poem ends with Don Juan's death conveyed by a single dissonant trumpet note and by descending tremolos suggesting the hero's last gasps for breath. "Beautiful was the fire that spurred me on," concludes Lenau's poem. "It has spent its fury, and now only silence remains . . . the fuel is all consumed, the hearth is cold and dark."

James DePreist deems the closing work on our program, Lutoslawski's **Concerto for Orchestra**, "an exquisite 20th century masterpiece that is too oft neglected." The present recording by the Oregon Symphony marks the work's first appearance on CD and one of the very few recordings in the catalog. Inspired by the conductor Rowicki's suggestion to write a new work for the Warsaw Philharmonic, Lutoslawski began his *Concerto for Orchestra* in 1950, completing it during the course of four years (1954). The Concerto was a huge and immediate success with the public and with the musical establishment, prompting Lutoslawski's reception of a State Prize. Such acclaim, during the period of formalist censorship in Stalinist Poland, is puzzling though it can be explained in part by Lutoslawski's use of Polish folk material in each of the three movements. For Lutoslawski, the Concerto was the only work from his middle period which he still considers important today and includes on his own concert programs.

Unlike the symphonic poems of Respighi and Strauss, Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra* has no extra-musical story or program. The title suggests an homage to Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* composed in 1943 in New York City. The two works bear certain similarities in their use of a chorale (see the second movement of Bartók's *Concerto*) and in their soloist treatment of individual instruments from the symphony orchestra. Both works also draw on their respective country's native folk music. However whereas Bartók actually quotes and arranges Hungarian folk tunes, Lutoslawski treats the Polish tunes and dances as raw material to be transformed into short motives and themes.

All the folk material in Lutoslawski's *Concerto* stems from sources in Masovia, the region around Warsaw. The opening movement, entitled "Intrada," serves as an introduction without bearing the march-like traits associated with the 16th and 17th century Baroque Intrada. Over an F# pedal in the double bass and a tolling F# in the tympani, the cellos introduce an assertive theme. This principal theme, based on a Masovian folk tune, is followed by successive imitative entries (cellos, violas, second violins, first violins, oboes), each time in a higher instrument and ending on a different home key. Throughout the series of thematic statements, two motives derived from folk songs provide counterpoint.

The "Intrada" takes the form of an arch. Interestingly when the opening section returns as a recapitulation, the reverberating F# which appeared in the double bass and

tympani at the beginning is now heard in the highest register (in piccolo, celesta, violins). The successive entries of the theme then descend in register from flutes to oboes to clarinet to English horn to clarinet. In the recapitulation James DePreist calls for the melodic whiffs which immediately follow the first thematic statement to be played with indifference. The piccolo, flute, and solo violin continue their detached comments in counterpoint with the successive entries of the theme. In the final bars of the “Intrada,” Lutoslawski introduces a sudden shift from minor to major mode. With this key change, DePreist observes, Lutoslawski brings us to a resolution of utter serenity, concluding the movement emotionally and dynamically light years away from its aggressive beginning.

In the second movement, “Capriccio notturno e Arioso, DePreist takes the “Vivace” at a slower tempo: were the violins and violas to play their chromatic lines too quickly, he observes, they would have to lift the bow off the string, thereby disturbing the “murmuring” quality which Lutoslawski specifies in the performance direction. The central Arioso section comes as a great surprise. Three trumpets play a lengthy theme of searing emotion made all the more poignant by the marcato interjections from the rest of the orchestra. Later in the Arioso, the woodwinds take up the theme. Interruptions become less frequent, and the singing Arioso wins out.

The Concerto’s Finale bears three titles — Passacaglia, Toccata e Corale — but is actually in two large

parts. The passacaglia serves as a long introduction and is succeeded by a toccata containing two interpolations of the chorale. The quiet pizzicato opening of the passacaglia is particularly dramatic because it follows a movement that ended softly. The passacaglia theme, heard ten times in the bass with variations above it, is derived from a folk source. The fascinating aspect of Lutoslawski’s treatment of the passacaglia is the way in which the theme gradually moves from lowest to highest register. The theme begins on low D, octave doublings are added, and by its tenth appearance it spans five octaves. On the eleventh playing the lower octaves are removed, and the theme appears only in the top register in the brass. Thus a theme which started as a ground bass becomes a prominent melody.

DePreist is struck by the compelling orchestration in the opening statements of the passacaglia. During the theme’s second statement, Lutoslawski introduces piano arpeggiation which creates a strikingly original color. The piano’s entry then builds to a mournful chromatic line in the English horn. During the sixth statement of the passacaglia (still played by double bass), Lutoslawski introduces a syncopated melody in first violins which enhances the shimmer already produced by flutes, clarinets, and harp.

The toccata opens with a lively transformation of the passacaglia theme in the violins. When the chorale is interpolated, it sounds first in woodwinds, then in brass, and finally in strings. A countermelody heard in the flutes

bears a noteworthy resemblance to the martyr's song in the first movement of *Roman Festivals*. The brass reprise of the chorale at the end of the movement is followed by a presto which DePreist deems "rude and sardonic, as if the composer is sticking his tongue out." Certainly the piccolo grace notes played way up in the stratosphere, the staccato melody in the flutes, and the snare drum punctuations seem to mock the pompous mood of the preceding chorale. In the view of DePreist, sardonic wit and drama are never far from Lutoslawski's music.

The range in this trio of works from explosive writing to delicacy and lyricism requires astonishing skill

and control from the orchestra. Thus the title of our program, BRAVURA, proclaiming both the daring artistry of Respighi, Strauss, and Lutoslawski in composing *Roman Festivals*, *Don Juan*, and *Concerto for Orchestra*, and the orchestral brilliance which a fine performance of these works imparts to the listener. James DePreist offers this trenchant summary of our "bravura" program: "It's one of the most demanding albums for an orchestra I have yet encountered. This is the first album in The Oregon Symphony's 92 years — not a time to be timid."

Nancy Perloff

ABOUT THIS RECORDING

The Arlene Schwitzer Concert Hall in Portland lends an intimacy and warmth to the sound of the Oregon Symphony, and our intent was to preserve this in recording. The basic microphone array was a pair of quasi-coincident cardioid microphones, flanked by a pair of spaced omnidirectional microphones. This frontal array provides the essential elements of lateral and depth imaging in the recording, at the same time preserving a feeling of hall ambience. Additional accent microphones, operating at low levels, were used to delineate inner orchestral details.

Delos' Dolby Surround™ recordings are encoded naturally during the basic recording session through the use of microphone techniques that randomize stereo pickup of ambient and reverberant cues in the recording space. This creates the spacious sound in normal two-speaker stereo listening for which Delos is noted. Through careful monitoring, these techniques also insure that surround playback enhances the listening experience by reproducing an ambient sound field more closely approaching that of a musical performance in a reverberant space.

John Eargle, Director of Recording

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

“One of the finest conductors this nation has produced” (*Chicago Tribune*), **James DePreist** has been Music Director of the Oregon Symphony since 1980. He is also Music Director of the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic. Much in demand as a guest conductor, DePreist pursues a distinguished career in America and abroad, regularly performing with the major American orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony. He led the Monte-Carlo Philharmonic on a second United States tour in the spring of 1998; recent appearances abroad include Amsterdam, Helsinki, Vienna, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Czech Republic and the Far East.

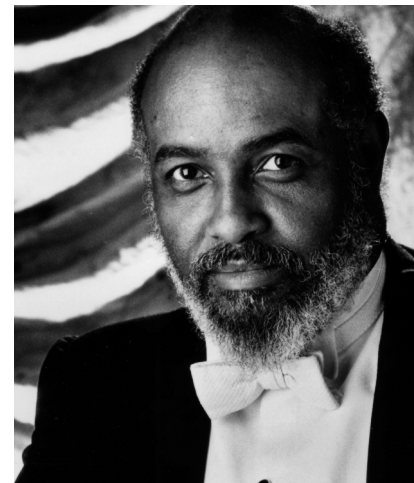
Born in Philadelphia in 1936, DePreist studied composition with Vincent Persichetti at the Philadelphia Conservatory and obtained Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1962, while on a State Department tour in Bangkok, he contracted polio but recovered sufficiently to win a first prize in the 1964 Dimitri Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition. He was selected by Leonard Bernstein to be an assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic for the 1965-66 season.

DePreist made his highly acclaimed European debut with the Rotterdam Philharmonic in 1969. In 1971 Antal Dorati chose DePreist to become his Associate Conductor with the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC. From 1976 to 1983 DePreist was Music Director of the Quebec Symphony.

James DePreist has been awarded 15 honorary doctorates and is the author of two books of poetry. He is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Swedish Academy of Music and is a recipient of the Insignia of Commander of the Order of the Lion of Finland. DePreist is the nephew of the legendary contralto Marian Anderson.

The Oregon Symphony is the oldest orchestra in the west and the sixth oldest major orchestra in the United States. Founded as the Portland Symphony in 1896, and renamed the Oregon Symphony in 1967, it has grown to be one of the finest major orchestras in the nation. *Ovation* critic Paul Turok wrote of *Bravura*, the Oregon Symphony's first recording under James DePreist: “In less than a decade, James DePreist has built an orchestra of regional significance into one worthy of national, and perhaps even international, attention...” In press commentary on *Bravura* and subsequent recordings, the Symphony has been ranked “first-class” by *Gramophone* and “a virtuoso ensemble” by *The Washington Post*.

The Oregon Symphony has the highest per capita subscription attendance of any major orchestra in the United States, and serves its entire region with an innovative touring program. In 1996 it used the touring model to launch a local series of free neighborhood parks concerts and educational outreach events funded through the Regional Arts and Culture Council by the city of Portland. In May of 1997 the orchestra was featured on PBS' Newshour with Jim Lehrer; a 90-minute television special produced by CBS affiliate KOIN Channel 6 in honor of the Symphony's Centennial featured a performance of Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 and was awarded a Northwest Regional Emmy in June of 1997.



James DePreist

OTHER DELOS RECORDINGS FEATURING JAMES DEPREIST AND THE OREGON SYMPHONY



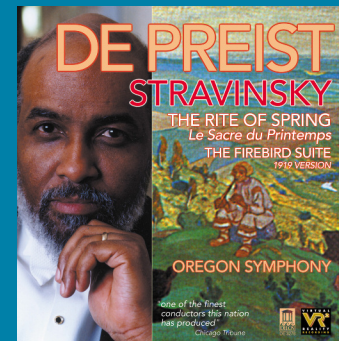
TCHAIKOVSKY: 1812 Overture • Hamlet • The Tempest • "... unquestionably the most successful modern recording." *Gramophone* • DE 3081 (DDD)



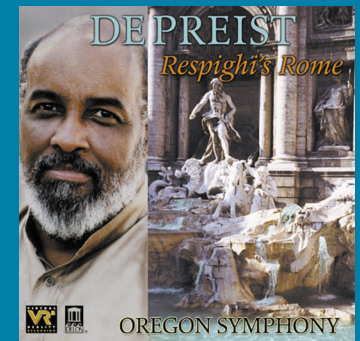
RACHMANINOFF: The Sea and the Gulls (Étude-Tableau Op. 39 No. 2, orch. Respighi) • **Symphony No. 2 • Vocalise** • Recording of Distinction, *Ovation* • DE 3071 (DDD)



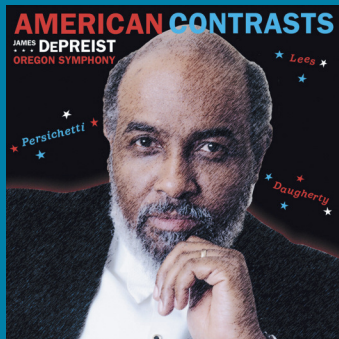
KORNGOLD: The Sea Hawk • Symphony in F-Sharp • DE 3234 (DDD)



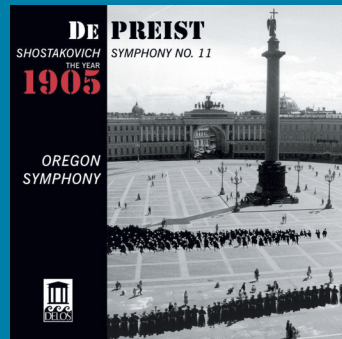
MUSIC of STRAVINSKY: The Rite of Spring • The Firebird Suite (1919 version) • DE 3278 (DDD)



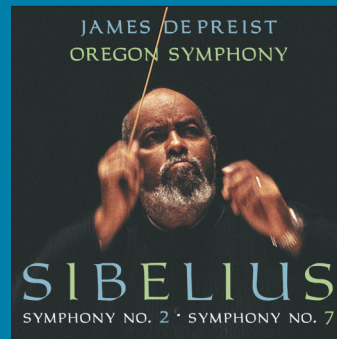
RESPIGHI'S ROME – Fountains of Rome • Pines of Rome • Roman Festivals • DE 3287 (DDD)



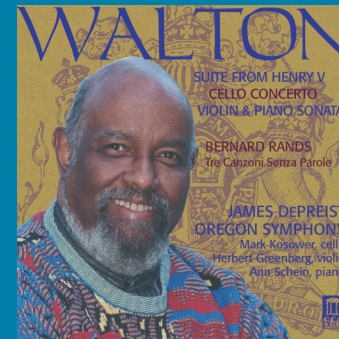
AMERICAN CONTRASTS – Benjamin Lees: Passacaglia for Orchestra • Vincent Persichetti: Symphony No. 4 • Michael Daugherty: Philadelphia Stories for Orchestra: Sundown on South Street; Hell's Angels • DE 3291 (DDD)



SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 11 The Year 1905 • DE 3329 (DDD)



SIBELIUS: Symphony No. 2 • Symphony No. 7 • Recorded Live • DE 3334 (DDD)



WALTON: Suite from Henry V, Cello Concerto, Violin & Piano Sonata • RANDS: Tre Canzoni senza Parole • Mark Kosower, cello; Herbert Greenberg, violin; Ann Schein, piano • DE 3342 (DDD)



TRAGIC LOVERS – WAGNER: Prelude and Liebestod from Tristan und Isolde • BERLIOZ: Romeo et Juliette, Op. 17 - II. Scene d'amour • TCHAIKOVSKY: Romeo and Juliet Fantasy-Overture • DE 3369 (DDD)